



Metropolitan Serapion

COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

DIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AND HAWAII

Paschal Message for the Feast of the Resurrection 2021

“Why do you seek the living among the dead?” (Lk 24:5)

My Beloved, the Blessed Children of the Holy Church,

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

It is my pleasure to wish you a blessed Feast of the Holy Resurrection, hoping that you are surrounded by peace and kept safe through the power of the glorious Resurrection.

We must begin our celebration by giving thanks to our Good and Powerful Lord, Who has granted us the opportunity to celebrate this Feast in our churches. Additionally, we have passed through the hardship of this pandemic and have been brought to rest through the power of Christ’s Resurrection. We ask our Lord to grant us prevailing peace, give healing to the world, and keep the doors of the churches open at all times to everyone.

In the Gospel of the Divine Liturgy of the Feast of the Resurrection, we read that Mary Magdalene went to the tomb weeping, because she believed that, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.” (Jn 20:13) Although she saw the Risen Christ, yet she did not recognize Him and supposed Him to be the gardener. But our Lord asked her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” (Lk 20:15) Similarly, when the myrrh-bearing women went to the tomb and didn’t find the Body of our Lord Jesus, “they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth.” But the two angels, who appeared to them, told them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!” (Lk 24:5, 6)

The weeping, fearful, and anxious person, with a face bowed to the earth, results from his inability to ask for the right things or from requesting the wrong things.

This is seen in both Mary Magdalene and the women carrying the spices. Mary went looking for Christ’s Body and was not able to realize that the empty tomb is a sign of the Resurrection, because our Lord Jesus changed the tomb from being a symbol of death to

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becoming a symbol of life. Likewise, the women carrying the spices went seeking the Living among the dead.

Before the Crucifixion, our Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My Name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” (Jn 16:23-24) Christ wanted to assure His disciples that although, “You now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you. And in that day you will ask Me nothing” (Jn 16:22, 23) “That day” is the day of the Resurrection, and when the Risen Christ appeared to His disciples, the Holy Scriptures record that, “When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord” (Jn 20:20)

My Beloved,

We rejoice, because through the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, He trampled death by His death and granted eternal life to those in the tombs. When Mary Magdalene was searching for the Lord’s Body and was seeking the Living among the dead, she was not happy and wept, because she did not realize that He is risen. Therefore, our true and complete joy comes when our requests are made in Christ’s Name.

If we search for Christ among the temporary things of this world;

If we search for Christ in order to be granted earthly matters;

If we search for Christ so He can establish an earthly kingdom,

Then we will certainly be sad, and we will weep.

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not promise His disciples that He will come and remain with them on earth, but He told them, “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (Jn 14:2-3)

My Beloved,

As we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us lift up our hearts and minds, remembering St. Paul’s words, “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” (Col 3:1-3)

Our real celebration of the Resurrection is the new life. St. Paul tells us that, “God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead

in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (Eph 2:4-6) This new life in Christ requires that we labor to sow good plants in order to reap good fruit, as St. Paul explained, “For whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.” (Ga 6:7, 8) St. James urged us to avoid evil requests, “You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures” (Jas 4:3)

The greatest request a man can ask for is wisdom, because the wise person will always labor for his eternal life, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” (Jas 1:5)

We should not seek the Living among the dead, and we should not request earthly things. Rather, we should entreat God to grant us wisdom, and help us to redeem the time for the days are evil.

Let us pray for the peace of the Church and may God lift this pandemic from the world.

Let us pray for our beloved father and shepherd, H.H. Pope Tawadros II.

Let us pray for the repose of all the departed souls, the healing of all the sick, and comfort for all the suffering and distressed people.

Wishing you many happy returns.

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